

MODERN LUXURY

ASPEN

MAGAZINE

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The Culture Issue

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Who?

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the Aspen Music
Festival and School**

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POSTER PLAY

Alexis Rockman transforms opera into visual art.

| By Hannah Flegelman |

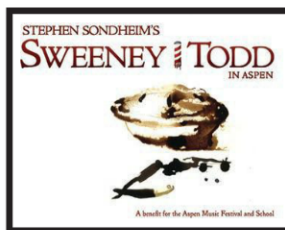
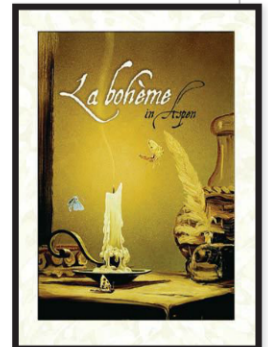
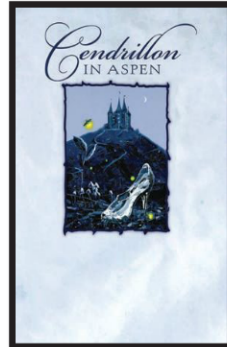
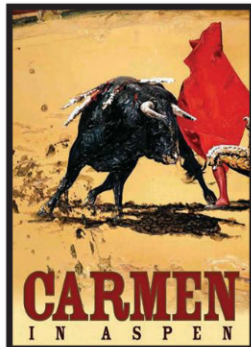
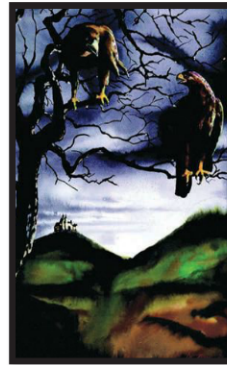
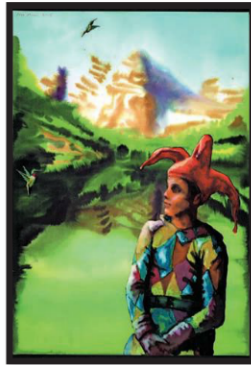
Alexis Rockman is no stranger to the drama of the opera. A contemporary artist widely known for his rich, figurative style of painting, Rockman addresses the intersection of humanity with natural forms and landscapes in much of his work. His panoramic scenes appear fit for the grand proscenium of a theater, and his recent artistic involvement in the 2012 animated film *Life of Pi* demonstrates his flair for visual storytelling.

So it comes as no surprise that the Aspen Music Festival and School will welcome Rockman back to envision the art for the Opera Gala's 10th anniversary benefit poster. The artist has been involved since the late Harley Baldwin founded the Opera Gala in 2003, making the coveted event unimaginable without these posters. Richard Edwards, Baldwin Gallery owner and benefit chair, acknowledges Rockman for creating "the artwork every year in memory of Harley. ... We truly appreciate his generosity with his time and effort."

Rockman devises the poster imagery for each gala by delving into the libretto and orchestral arrangements in order to convey the essence of each opera. This year, the AMFS will present Leonard Bernstein's comic operetta, *Candide*. The celebrated score, set to an adaptation of Voltaire's 1759 satirical novel, is considered a gem of American musical theater. Rockman's image depicts an exotic fiery landscape. Red, orange and fuchsia hues make up looming rock formations; the only sign of life is a dragonfly hovering below a single palm tree. This lush, dystopian vision of paradise incites the drama rooted in *Candide's* epic narrative.

The Opera Gala is the AMFS' most coveted and successful fundraiser, attracting to the exclusive affair a who's who of the art and music worlds. Preceding the opening night performance at Wheeler Opera House, Edwards will open his art-filled downtown penthouse for cocktails. Dinner at the legendary Caribou Club will follow.

"Harley Baldwin created the unique, exclusive opera gala 10 years ago; under the patronage of Richard Edwards, it continues its high-flying commitment to style and beauty," says AMFS President and CEO Alan Fletcher. *Cocktail party, 5PM; dinner, 6PM; performance, 8PM, all-inclusive ticket, \$1,000; performance ticket, \$100; Wheeler Opera House, 320 E. Hyman Ave., aspenmusicfestival.com; Alexis Rockman is represented in Aspen by Baldwin Gallery, 209 S. Galena St., baldwingallery.com*



ARIA ART

Left to right, top to bottom: Rockman's artwork representing operas in Aspen over the past 10 years: *Rigoletto*, 2004; *Lucia di Lammermoor*, 2005; *La*

Traviata, 2006; *Carmen*, 2007; *Candillon*, 2008; *La Bohème*, 2009; *The Barber of Seville*, 2010; *West Side Story*, 2011; *Sweeney Todd*, 2012; 10th annual gala: *Candide*, 2013.